



## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Legal Specialist

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

CSC Docket No. 2027-419

Administrative Appeal

ISSUED: September 2, 2026 (KAG)

The Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) request implementation of the attached Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), granting relief to certain incumbents of the Legal Specialist title series.

By way of background, in *In the Matter of Legal Specialist Title Series* (CSC, decided November 26, 2025), the Civil Service Commission (Commission) granted a request to create a new unclassified title series: Legal Specialist 1 (P26), Legal Specialist 2 (R29), Legal Specialist 3 (&32), and Legal Specialist 3, Confidential (M32). In so doing, the Commission also ordered the inactivation of the title Legal Specialist (X98), once that title was unencumbered. Prior incumbents in the Legal Specialist (X98) title were to be cross walked into the appropriate level of the newly created title series.

As a result of the crosswalk of incumbents in the no-range Legal Specialist (X98) title into the newly established Legal Specialist title series, where all levels of the title are assigned to a salary range, several of the cross walked incumbents had their salary "red circled," as their current salary exceeded the maximum salary of their new salary range. The unintended consequence of this "red circling" was that these incumbents were not eligible for the negotiated 3.5% across the board salary increase, which took effect on July 11, 2026. Had the incumbents remained in the Legal Specialist (X98) title, they would have been eligible for this salary increase.

In order to address this anomaly, GOER and CWA entered into the MOA, whereby they agreed that any employee in the newly created Legal Specialist title series who had been “red circled” would continue to receive negotiated across the board salary increases, notwithstanding that their current salary exceeds the maximum salary in their newly assigned salary range.<sup>1</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:3-4.12 provides:

- (a) When a title is changed from a no-range or single rate category to a range in the Compensation Plan, or when an employee moves from a no-range title to a title having a salary range, the salary shall be adjusted up to the step in the range that is the same or next higher than the salary of the no range or single rate title and the anniversary date assigned based on the pay period the employee would have been eligible for an increase in the no range or single rate title, providing the following two criteria are met:
  - 1. The [Commission] finds that service in the no-range title provided the employee with significant experience and training for service in the range title; and
  - 2. The employee has served in the former title for four months or more
- (b) When the employee’s appointment does not satisfy the conditions in (a) above, salary and anniversary date shall be determined by reconstructing the employee’s salary as if the employee had been serving in the range title on the date the employee was appointed to the no-range title, provided, however, that in no event shall the new salary be higher than the salary in the no-range title.
- (c) If the employee’s base salary is above the maximum step, the employee will be red circled, that is, remain at that salary until the maximum step of the range is increased to a level at or above the employee’s base salary, at which time the employee’s salary shall be moved to that maximum step of the range.

In accordance with *N.J.A.C.* 4A:3-4.12(c), 11 employees who were cross walked into the new Legal Specialist title series were “red circled” upon appointment to the appropriate level of the new series. GOER and CWA are essentially now requesting that the provisions of that rule be relaxed, in order to permit these employees to

---

<sup>1</sup> It is noted that contrary to the information contained in the MOA, there are currently only 11 incumbents whose salaries are “red circled.” The incumbents are identified on the attached list.

receive negotiated across the board salary increases, rather than remaining at their current salary until the maximum step of their range is increased to a level at or above the employee's base salary.

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:1-1.2(c) provides that the Commission may relax these rules for good cause in a particular situation, on notice to affected parties, in order to effectuate the purposes of Title 11A, New Jersey Statutes. In the instant matter, the Commission emphasizes that the original request to create the new title series was in no way intended to place any employee at a financial disadvantage. Rather, the intent was to create various levels of the Legal Specialist title reflective of the respective incumbent's level of work and supervision. Moreover, in light of the parties' MOA, which demonstrates their agreement to reverse the unintended consequence of the crosswalk of these employees, the Commission finds good cause under the particular circumstances presented to grant this request and relax the provisions of *N.J.A.C.* 4A:3-4.12(c). As such, it is appropriate to grant the employees the 3.5% across the board salary increase, effective July 11, 2026, as well as any future negotiated across the board salary increases while they remain in their current titles.

### **ORDER**

Therefore, it is ordered that the employees listed in the attachment be granted a 3.5% salary increase, effective July 11, 2026. It is further ordered that these employees be granted any future negotiated across the board salary increases while they remain in their current titles.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON  
THE 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2026



---

Mary Cruz  
Acting Chair/Chief Executive Officer  
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries  
and  
Correspondence

Shannon Dalton  
Director  
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs  
Civil Service Commission  
P.O. Box 312  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

Attachments

c:     Tonya Hodges  
         Steve Katz  
         Records Center  
         Division of Agency Services  
         Division of Human Resource Information Services

## Attachment

| NAME               | DEPARTMENT                             |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Alichia Washington | Civil Service Commission               |
| Dominic Giova      | Department of Community Affairs        |
| Vanessa Day        | Department of Environmental Protection |
| Kara Unal          | Department of Health                   |
| Samuel Stewart     | Department of Health                   |
| Chrisann Wright    | Department of Human Services           |
| Karen Campbell     | Department of Human Services           |
| Lisa Ciaston       | Department of Human Services           |
| Kya Saunders       | Department of Human Services           |
| Erick Lucadamo     | Department of Human Services           |
| Elise Olgin        | Department of Law and Public Safety    |